

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

- 1 1. A spray tool apparatus for spraying polyurethane, comprising:
2 a plurality of supply sources, each supply source containing one of
3 a plurality polyurethane constituents;
4 a plurality of recirculating fluid circuits each in fluid flow
5 communication with one of the supply sources for distributing one of the
6 polyurethane constituents;
7 a mix head connected to each of the fluid circuits that receives from
8 each fluid circuit one of the polyurethane constituents, the mix head having a
9 chamber in which the plurality of polyurethane constituents are mixed to form a
10 polyurethane mixture;
11 a hydraulically operated valve for controlling the flow of the
12 polyurethane constituents to the mix head, the valve having a first position in which
13 the polyurethane constituents flow into the chamber of the mix head and a second
14 position in which the polyurethane constituents are recirculated through the fluid
15 circuits without being mixed in the mixing chamber; and
16 a spray nozzle assembly through which the polyurethane mixture is
17 dispensed when the valve is in the first position.
- 1 2. The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the polyurethane
2 constituents are polyol, isocyanate, and pigmented polyol.
- 1 3. The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the recirculating fluid
2 circuits each have a separate pump for pressurizing one of the polyurethane
3 constituents.
- 1 4. The apparatus of claim 1 further comprising a liquid solvent
2 supplied to the mix head under pressure to purge the polyurethane mixture from the
3 chamber in the mix head and the spray nozzle assembly when the valve is in the
4 second position.

1 5. The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the hydraulically operated
2 valve has a hydraulically actuated piston that is provided with separate channels for
3 each of the polyurethane constituents through which the constituents flow when the
4 valve is in the second position.

1 6. The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the hydraulically actuated
2 valve is operated by a hydraulic fluid circuit that has a reciprocating piston that
3 shifts the valve between the first and second positions.

1 7. The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the hydraulically actuated
2 valve is operated by a hydraulic fluid circuit that has a reciprocating piston that
3 shifts a valve spool within an elongated chamber, the valve spool and chamber being
4 sealed relative to each other as the valve spool moves between the first and second
5 positions.

1 8. The apparatus of claim 7 further comprising a seal secured to
2 the valve spool that seals against the chamber.

1 9. The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the spray nozzle assembly
2 has a tubular portion and a static helical mixing vane disposed in the tubular portion
3 that mixes the polyurethane mixture before the polyurethane mixture is dispensed
4 through a nozzle tip.

1 10. The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the mixture of polyurethane
2 is sprayed on a mold to form a polyurethane skin for a vehicle interior part.

1 11. A method of forming a polyurethane skin for an interior part
2 of a vehicle, comprising:
3 pumping an isocyanate composition to a mix head;
4 pumping a polyol composition to the mix head;
5 opening a valve selectively to allow the polyol composition and the
6 isocyanate composition to be injected under pressure into a mixing chamber defined
7 by the mix head in a first position to create a polyurethane reactant mixture;

8 closing the valve selectively to allow the polyol composition and
9 isocyanate composition to be recirculated through the valve in a second position;
10 moving the valve with a hydraulically actuated cylinder that moves
11 a valve element within a valve body between the first position and the second
12 position;
13 dispensing the polyurethane reactant mixture through a spray nozzle;
14 and
15 shaping the polyurethane reactant mixture on a mold surface to form
16 a polyurethane skin.

1 12. The method of claim 11 further comprising mixing the
2 polyurethane reactant mixture with a static helical mixing vane disposed in a tubular
3 portion of the spray nozzle.

1 13. The method of claim 11 further comprising spraying a solvent
2 into the mixing chamber when the valve is in the second position to purge the
3 polyurethane reactant mixture from the mixing chamber and the spray nozzle.

1 14. The method of claim 11 wherein the valve element further
2 comprises a piston that is provided with a first separate channel for the isocyanate
3 composition and a second separate channel for the polyol composition, wherein each
4 of the compositions flow through one of the separate channels when the valve is in
5 the second position.

1 15. A method of forming a polyurethane skin for an interior part
2 of a vehicle, comprising:
3 pumping an isocyanate composition to a mix head;
4 pumping a polyol composition to the mix head;
5 pumping a pigmented polyol composition to the mix head;
6 opening a valve selectively to allow the polyol composition, the
7 isocyanate composition, and the pigmented polyol to be injected under pressure into
8 a mixing chamber defined by the mix head in a first position to create a pigmented
9 polyurethane reactant mixture;

10 closing the valve selectively to allow the polyol composition,
11 isocyanate composition, and the pigmented polyol to be recirculated in a second
12 position;
13 moving the valve with a hydraulically actuated cylinder that moves
14 a valve element within a valve body between the first position and the second
15 position;
16 dispensing the pigmented polyurethane reactant mixture through a
17 spray nozzle; and
18 shaping the pigmented polyurethane reactant mixture on a mold
19 surface to form a polyurethane skin.

1 16. The method of claim 15 further comprising mixing the
2 pigmented polyurethane reactant mixture with a static helical mixing vane disposed
3 in a tubular portion of the spray nozzle.

1 17. The method of claim 15 further comprising spraying a solvent
2 into the mixing chamber when the valve is in the second position to purge the
3 pigmented polyurethane reactant mixture from the mixing chamber and the spray
4 nozzle.

1 18. The method of claim 15 wherein the valve element further
2 comprises a piston that is provided with a first separate channel for the isocyanate
3 composition, a second separate channel for the polyol composition, and a third
4 separate channel for the pigmented polyol composition, wherein each of the
5 compositions flow through one of the separate channels when the valve is in the
6 second position.